Deconstructing Archaeology's Digital Media

Announcing *Advances in Archaeological Practice's* Digital Reviews

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Are you an avid fan of Instagram-ed excavation finds, or You-Tube clips of archaeologists? Ever visited an archaeologically-themed virtual museum? Or have you taken a tour of a historic site with a mobile app as your guide? Have you searched for the best Minecraft games deployed in the name of heritage? Or are you regularly on the lookout for blogs to keep you up-to-date on new archaeological thinking?

Beginning with our next issue, *Advances in Archaeological Practice* (AAP) will become the first major archaeological journal in the English-speaking world to to regularly review the highs and lows, the practicalities, personal experiences and audience impacts of the full range of digital media applied to our discipline. Moving beyond standard book or exhibition reviews, here we will explore any (and all) current digital initiatives produced to engage both general and specialist audiences. Our concern is to push on the boundaries of the review format, turning it into a space where the increasing array of digital outputs being developed and marketed in archaeology are compared and subjected to critical reflection.

Whilst others have ventured into non-traditional practices of review, including the journal *Cultural Anthropology*'s diverse and open access "Visual and New Media Review" section, most limit their discussion to considerations of exhibitions or film productions. Similarly, despite the vast assortment of museums-focused journals, reviews of online exhibitions specifically are seemingly rare. A recent post to the mailing list of the UK-based Museums Computer Group (http://museumscomputergroup.org.uk/), soliciting references to such online exhibition reviews, yielded only a handful of suggestions, including *Reviews in History*—a journal that is exclusively focused on the publication of reviews themselves. *Internet Archaeology* appears to be the pioneer of reviewing digitally-oriented archaeology and heritage media, although we would like to stretch the range and nature of our

contributions further, as well as regularize publication of these reviews in every journal issue.

In the coming years, then, we seek to complement AAP's usual Research and How-To articles with constructive, professional and courteous—yet critically-engaged—assessments of contemporary digital media offerings for archaeological and heritage audiences. Future issues will explore augmented reality applications, TED talks, Tumblr, Facebook and Snapchat sites, web-based crowdsourcing projects, online collections, video games, virtual worlds, and more. We also seek suggestions for other articles, and we actively welcome you to contact our editorial team, through myself (as Digital Reviews Editor), to discuss possibilities.

Ultimately, these reviews aim to briefly summarize new digital initiatives for archaeology and heritage publics, contextualize them against other such initiatives, and offer constructive critique of their presentation, methods, intended objectives and emotional, physical and intellectual impacts upon audiences. Our Digital Reviews section, then, intends to (1) add further rigor to the evaluation of archaeology's digital media; (2) showcase to our readers the breadth and depth of relevant digital media production today; and (3) provide a space of comparison between - and critical engagement with - such productions to enable others to build upon them. Herein, we hope to create a body of published reflections that can serve both as a repository of learning and as a wellspring of inspiration. We envision that this might then encourage even more robust development and circulation of digital media for archaeological audiences in the long term.

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